



PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Announces New Grand Challenge Initiative to Solicit Innovative Solutions for Marine Economy Challenges

Seaport Economic Council also awarded \$3.6 million for five projects to support infrastructure in coastal communities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

2/13/2018

Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development

Seaport Economic Council

MEDIA CONTACT

Samantha Kaufman, Deputy Director of Communications



Online

samantha.kaufman@state.ma.us

QUINCY — Today, the Baker-Polito Administration awarded a total of \$4,150,000 for five marine infrastructure projects, and a new initiative, the SEC Grand Challenge, to leverage Massachusetts' innovation economy for the benefit of our coastal communities. The Seaport Economic Council will make up to \$500,000 available to the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MassTech) to support innovative solutions for marine and coastal communities. The Seaport Economic Council approved the awards at today's meeting in Quincy, which was chaired by Lt. Governor Karyn Polito. Since 2015, the Seaport Economic Council has awarded \$28 million through 61 grants in 36 Coastal Communities.

"We are thrilled to see the Seaport Economic Council partner with the MassTech Collaborative to better connect our communities with cutting-edge innovation, and give entrepreneurs the opportunity to develop new technologies directly with partners in the marine economy," **said Governor Baker.**

"Massachusetts continues to be a vital testing ground for new technologies, and we are excited for our coastal communities to reap the benefits."

"The Seaport Economic Council is a vital resource for our coastal communities and we are proud of the work it has done since 2015," **said Lt. Governor Polito.** "The Council has invested \$28 million in critical infrastructure, economic development and climate resiliency projects in 36 coastal communities to support the unique challenges of our cities and towns with significant marine assets. The Grand Challenge will help connect entrepreneurs and technology companies with non-profits, research institutions and municipalities to develop transformative solutions."

The Grand Challenge Program represents an opportunity to offer innovative solutions to improve marine and coastal community resources in Massachusetts. The Internet of Things (IoT) represents technology and business innovations that can enhance the economic potential of our ocean and coastal resources that contribute to the prosperity of the Commonwealth, and provide potential solutions to today's environmental challenges. The Grand Challenge will focus on projects that address maritime communications, maritime performance and data analysis, and commercial fishing, and cover a broad range of subjects, including aquaculture, shipping, marine biotechnology, offshore renewable energy, marine robotics and more.

The Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED) and the Seaport Economic Council (SEC) will partner with MassTech to fund projects that leverage the strength of IoT technologies to improve our marine and coastal communities. The Grand Challenge will encourage entrepreneurs and technology firms to work with nonprofits, research institutions, municipalities, or other public authorities on the deployment of new and novel IoT-based technology or business solutions to address important opportunities in the Marine Economy.

"The Seaport Economic Council is committed to helping communities effectively leverage their maritime resources, to create new opportunities for residents, tourists and businesses," **said Deputy Secretary of**

Housing and Economic Development Carolyn Kirk, vice-chairwoman of the Seaport Economic Council. “This first-of-its-kind initiative in Massachusetts is an exciting opportunity to connect our coastal communities to emerging technologies as we continue to fund vital maritime infrastructure, and reach the full potential of our blue economy.”

“We thank the Baker-Polito Administration and the Seaport Economic Council for their support of the Grand Challenge and look forward to rolling out this program over the coming weeks,” said **Pat Larkin, Director of the Innovation Institute at MassTech**. “Technologies that are driving the Internet of Things, including nanotechnology, advanced sensors, data analytics, robotics, and communication technologies – are being revolutionized by firms based here in the Commonwealth. We’re eager to identify and then bring these tech resources to bear on challenges faced by our coastal communities, while helping drive job creation and economic growth with the marine economy.”

“The Seaport Economic Council is an invaluable resource for coastal communities throughout the Commonwealth, and its work in Quincy is showing real results every day,” said **Quincy Mayor Thomas P. Koch**. “I’m grateful for the commitment of the Baker-Polito Administration and look forward to welcoming the full Council to our great City.”

“We’re thankful to the Seaport Economic Council for this important grant, which will greatly improve access for South Shore residents to Boston Harbor and help improve the resiliency of the neighborhood to the effects of climate change,” said **Representative Tackey Chan**. “I look forward to seeing what the next phase of this project brings and am grateful for the continued partnership with the Council.”

The [Seaport Economic Council](#) advances the Baker-Polito Administration’s support for communities and residents across the state by leveraging unique economic assets to drive sustainable regional growth. The council was re-launched in August 2015, with a mission to deepen the maritime economy, promote economic development, and support resilient infrastructure in all 78 of Massachusetts’ coastal communities while preparing them to engage with the challenges posed by sea level rise and increasingly powerful coastal storms. The council’s capital grant program supports working waterfronts, local tourism, coastal resiliency, and maritime innovation, from the North Shore to Cape Cod and the South Coast.

Seaport Economic Council Awards:

Barnstable, Fire and Rescue Training Academy - \$300,000

SEC funds will contribute to the cost of a simulator for its shipboard firefighting training program to support the state’s commercial and recreational boating industry and its seaside communities. The

simulator will provide maritime professionals and land-based firefighters hands-on experience with marine-related fires and suppression tactics.

Harwich, Saquatucket Harbor Landslide Renovation - \$1,000,000

SEC grant will help fund the construction of a new Harbormaster Office building with expanded restroom facilities for both the public and slip permit holders. The project will also include a space for a snack building to be leased to a private operator, as well as seasonal booths to be leased and operated by local vendors and artisans.

New Bedford, New Bedford HDC Central Command Center - \$1,000,000

SEC funds will help fund the construction of a command center for police and fire marine personnel, and create a response/training room for port personnel to ensure coordinated and efficient communications between all agencies responsible for daily port operations and emergency response. With the increased shipping activity as a result of the state's investment in refrigeration of the State Pier, and the growing maritime economy of the city, it is important to protect vital economic assets in case of marine emergency.

Quincy, Quincy Maritime Center - \$1,000,000

As a next phase of a 2016 SEC grant for the design of the Houghs Neck Maritime Center, this round's SEC funds will contribute to the final design, bidding, and construction of the facility. The future facility will provide for safe, public, municipal, and emergency access to the water of Houghs Neck, improve the climate change resiliency of the site, provide improved stormwater treatment, improve public safety support infrastructure, and enhance the safety and accessibility of the site. The project will also address ADA compliance and accessibility.

Wareham, Onset Bathhouse Rehabilitation - \$350,000

SEC funds will contribute toward renovation costs of the Historic Onset Bathhouse as Headquarters of the Onset Bay Center. The future center is aimed to be a headquarters, community learning center, and boat storage facility. The Center will provide high-quality on-the-water exploration programs for thousands of people every year and engage with community members of all ages and abilities in a variety of activities focused on building a connection with Buzzards Bay.

Media Contact

Samantha Kaufman, Deputy Director of Communications



Online

samantha.kaufman@state.ma.us

[Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development →](#)

[More →](#)

[Seaport Economic Council →](#)

The Seaport Economic Council helps coastal communities develop and improve local assets to leverage economic growth. The Council awards grants to create jobs and build resilience to climate change.

[More →](#)